Canadian "Jointery"

Fighter group operations center during Amalgam Warrior 96–1.

Combat Camera Imagery (Greg Suhay)

By JEREMY R. STOCKER

About the only real growth today in Canada's defense establishment is in the area of joint operations. Canada is certainly far from unique in this regard. Where it differs from other nations is that since February 1, 1968 it has not had a separate army, navy, and air force. On that date, the Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy, and Royal Canadian Air Force were amalgamated into the Canadian Forces (CF), which poses a difficulty in terminology. While joint operations are generally understood to involve elements of more than one service, Canada in theory has only one service with land, sea, and air elements. But, in practice, joint operations in Canada as elsewhere can be defined as involving operations in more than one *environment*.

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Since Canada has had unified forces for nearly thirty years, one might think that "jointery" is second nature. Its military institutions, support structures, and much of the training system are unified, with the advantages in rationalization and economy of forces such synergism implies for a small-to-medium sized power. Actual operations, however, were a different matter altogether until recently. Unification was, for various reasons, institutional and bureaucratic, but not operational. The army—Land Forces Command—even managed to retain a British-style regimental system.

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In terms of its commitment to NATO this distinction between institutional and operational arrangements made some sense for Canada in the Cold War. Maritime Command and Maritime Air Group of Air Command were fully committed to their specialized role of anti-submarine warfare in the North Atlantic. The army, with supporting air elements, was committed to the central front in Germany. Moreover, in addition to supporting other commands, Air Command played a major role with the U.S. Air Force under the bilateral North American Air Defense (NORAD) agreement. These prime tasks proceeded in almost total isolation of one another, reflecting a degree of national specialization in the alliance. Even contributions to peacekeeping operations, in which Canada has a long tradition and takes much pride, tended to be single-environment. Thus Canada has gained far more experience in combined than joint operations.

The end of the Cold War and diminishing defense resources are common to every military establishment. Canada, although more belatedly than some of its allies, determined that jointness was the way of the future. This reflects a determination to get more bang for the buck as well as a recognition that operational needs require much closer links among different warfare environments. In formulating doctrine for planning and conducting joint operations, Canada has unashamedly drawn on the experiences and practices of its allies, the United States and the United Kingdom in particular, adapting ideas where appropriate to its own much smaller forces with their unique needs and concerns. It is worth noting that it seems inevitable that future joint operations undertaken by Canada will also be combined operations.

Together with its allies, Canada foresees that joint operations will be controlled by a joint force commander (JFC) and his staff, but that deployed forces will be contributed by the three existing environmental commands. Forces will be controlled by their respective component commanders or, in smaller operations, a JFC directly. Supporting elements such as communications, logistics, and medical units are provided in unified form, although the individual members wear army, navy, or air force uniforms. The joint headquarters can operate as a Canadian national headquarters, with responsibility for a sector or task in a wider alliance or coalition operation. Alternatively, elements and individuals for more integrated combined joint command structures also can be contributed.

Canadian doctrine for conducting joint and combined operations is evolving, a process that is likely to continue indefinitely, and is contained in a publication known as the "keystone manual." An entire family of publications dealing with different facets of joint operations is derived from this manual, many of which are still under development. This hierarchy of doctrine closely mirrors the system of joint pubs in the U.S. Armed Forces. Prominent in this doctrine are terms familiar to all: principles of war, operational level of war, command and control, et al. Canadian joint doctrine is fully in accord with allied practices and NATO doctrine.

All operations are directed on the strategic level by the Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (DCDS) who, in turn, is responsible to the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS). DCDS acts as the chief operations officer, assisted by the Chief of Staff (COS) J-3 and a permanent Joint Operations Staff at National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) in Ottawa. J-3 issues operational tasking to meet programmed and emergency requirements. The staff is responsible for planning, conducting, and coordinating operations on the strategic level and provides a JFC with a single point of contact at NDHQ. Command on the strategic level is retained by CDS while his other subordinates (namely, the Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, commanders, and civilian assistant deputy ministers) provide forces which are ready to be deployed and advise on their use but are not in the operational chain of command.

Command of a joint force on the operational level is exercised by JFCs who of course have their own headquarters staff. Two types of joint force headquarters (JFHQ) are employed. A formation-based JFHQ serves for operations in and around Canada and for limited international operations. It is situated at one of four Land Force area headquarters or at either Atlantic or Pacific maritime coastal headquarters. An air formation headquarters could also be designated a JFHQ. Such headquarters would normally remain static in their existing facilities but conceptually could be deployed.

For more complex operations, a deployable JFHQ is established, based on the headquarters of the 1st Canadian Division and augmented with appropriate cross-environmental staff. Normally based in Kingston, Ontario, the division's headquarters remains a Land Force unit; but in a joint operation it answers directly to the Joint Staff at NDHQ. JFCs are appointed by CDS for particular operations and drawn from the environment most appropriate to the task. This deployable JFHQ, though based on an army headquarters, has permanent dark- and light-blue augmentees who wear only J hats, whereas the army staff tends to wear both G and J hats. The continental staff system employing G, N, or J designations (1 through 6) is used across all headquarters in Canada.

Component commanders of a joint force can be part of the JFHQ staff but may well be in separate headquarters. A land component commander, for example, can be a brigade commander with his own staff and headquarters. A naval component commander is likely to be a commander task group (CTG) at sea, though he could be ashore. The concept of the joint force air component commander (JFACC) is part of Canadian joint doctrine, but on a modest scale. Of the component commanders, JFACCs are the most likely to be collocated with JFCs.

doctrine for planning joint operations on the strategic level is well advanced

Given that any significant deployed force will almost certainly be part of a wider alliance or coalition, CF may operate in a distinct national area of responsibility, with operational control of forces remaining under a Canadian JFC. Alternatively, control of one or more components may be passed to a separate coalition headquarters (which probably would have some Canadian content), with a more limited national JFHQ to address unilateral concerns. Command on the tactical level is exercised by JTF commanders, when appointed, and by the separate component commanders.

Key to the Canadian concept of jointness is the joint operations planning process (JOPP). This is now routinely employed in exercises as well as real-world operations as, for example, in Operation Cobra, the plan for withdrawing Canadian forces from the former Yugoslavia. So far as possible, JOPP utilizes pre-existing contingency operation plans (COPs), thus reducing reliance on ad hoc planning in a contingency. Plans provide for establishing joint headquarters and deploying front line forces and supporting elements.

Canadian planning is generally capability-based, working with force levels that realistically might be available. This represents something of a shift from the Cold War when commitment-based planning was the norm. The list of available forces (see figure) that can be deployed for a particular operation is clearly identified, each part supported by an OPLAN. This list is by no means the full range of Canadian forces, but it indicates the force size that could conceivably be available for given operations. During the Persian Gulf War, for example, Canada deployed a naval task group and CF–18 fighters but not ground troops. Current operations outside Canada, almost all U.N. peacekeeping missions, involve 3,500 out of a total of 60,000 personnel. Most are in the Adriatic or the former Yugoslavia and others in Rwanda and Haiti. A few serve in places as far apart as Cambodia, Sinai, and Mozambique. In this Canadians are no different from any other nation, though it is probably fair to say that the range and size of their commitment to U.N. operations is without parallel for a country with its resources. The army, in particular, feels the familiar "overstretch," with some soldiers having served three or four tours in Bosnia or Croatia.

The development of Canadian doctrine for planning joint operations on the strategic level is well advanced. On the operational level staffs are fast gaining knowledge and experience. On the tactical level doctrine is rather more patchy. In some important areas Canada has not developed doctrine and procedures that enable forces from different environments to operate together. For example, although there is some experience with army low-level air defense attachments being deployed on board ships, such assets have yet to be fully integrated into overall task group air defense procedures. In other areas, however, things are doing better. NATO coordinated air-sea procedures have been adapted to fit the Canadian region of NORAD. Comparatively few modifications were needed. Voice and data links with the Sector Operations Control Centre at North Bay, Ontario, are standard for Canadian ships, and related command and control is becoming progressively more complex and ambitious.

"Jointery" is alive and well and is fast maturing in Canada. Structures may differ, but the concept is much the same as in other countries. Significantly, *joint* is only half the equation, and *combined* features just as much in Canadian defense thinking. **JFQ**

List of Available Canadian Forces

- deployable joint force headquarters
- mechanized brigade group
  - —up to three infantry battalions
  - —armored regiment
  - —artillery regiment
  - —combat engineer regiment
  - —other brigade-level forces (low-level air defense, military police, intelligence, ambulance, and service battalion units)
- naval task group
  - —*Iroquois*-class anti-air warfare/command destroyer
  - —up to three *Halifax*-class anti-submarine warfare frigates
  - —AOR (auxiliary)
- wing (two squadrons) of CF–18 *Hornet* fighters
- tactical helicopter squadron
- *Aurora* maritime patrol aircraft detachment
- support group
- medical group